

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 072224Z AUG 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2803
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 03130

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS NIACT IMMEDIATE TO SECRETARY'S
PARTY FOR SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, MARR, XF, LE, IS, US
SUBJECT: LEBANESE UN PERMREP ON THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT

SUMMARY: LEBANESE UN PERMREP TUENI CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
LEONARD AUGUST 7 TO ASK US SUPPORT FOR SOME URGENT NEW
STEP TO STOP THE FIGHTING IN BEIRUT. TUENI SUGGESTED
SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES INCLUDING CONVENING OF ARAB
MINI-SUMMIT, VISIT BY ATHERTON, SAUNDERS OR ARAB-
AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO ASSAD, CREATION OF
UN FACT-FINDING MISSION, OR AS LAST RESORT, CONVENING
OF SECURITY COUNCIL. END SUMMARY.

1. TUENI, WHO RETURNED FROM BEIRUT LAST WEEK, DESCRIBED
SITUATION IN BEIRUT AS VERY BAD AND CONTINUING TO
DETERIORATE. SPEAKING WITH EVIDENT SENSE OF
FRUSTRATION AND DESPERATION, TUENI SAID HE HAD BEEN
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CALLED ON THE PHONE THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT IN A SERIES OF
EMOTIONAL DISCUSSIONS WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN BEIRUT.
ON BASIS OF HIS DISCUSSIONS (WHICH WE BELIEVE ALMOST
CERTAINLY INCLUDE CONTACT WITH BOUTROS, IF NOT
SARKIS), HE REPORTED THAT CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE
GEMAYEL WERE DETERMINED TO CONTINUING FIGHTING--
THE FORMER REFUSING TO LEAVE HIS BUNKER TO TALK TO

ANYONE, AND THE LATTER INSISTING THAT IT WAS UP TO THE SYRIANS TO STOP FIRING BUT APPARENTLY NOT BEING PREPARED TO AGREE THAT CHRISTIANS WOULD DO LIKEWISE. TUENI APPEALED FOR USG TO CONSIDER WITH EXTREME URGENCY MEASURES TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT DELAY IN ORDER TO STOP THE FIGHTING. IN COURSE OF LENGTHY DISCUSSION, HE SUGGESTED THE FOLLOWING POSSIBILITIES.

2. ARAB MINI-SUMMIT:

TUENI BELIEVES IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO CONVENE A MINI-SUMMIT WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF KUWAIT, SAUDI ARABIA, SYRIA, AND PERHAPS JORDAN. HE RECALLED THAT KUWAITI FOREIGN MINISTER HAD SUGGESTED MINI-SUMMIT SEVERAL WEEKS AGO ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO FOLLOW UP AT THAT TIME. TUENI SAID HUSSEIN HAD GOOD CONNECTIONS WITH LEBANESE CHRISTIANS AND COULD PLAY USEFUL ROLE. PURPOSE OF MINI-SUMMIT WOULD BE TO SEEK WAY TO BRING ABOUT CEASE-FIRE IN BEIRUT AND WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN FORCES FROM AT LEAST CERTAIN PARTS OF BEIRUT AND PERHAPS TO CHANGE COMPOSITION OF ADF BY INCLUSION OF MORE NON-SYRIAN FORCES WHICH COULD REPLACE SYRIANS IN BEIRUT. US SUPPORT FOR MINI-SUMMIT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL, ESPECIALLY IN ACTIVATING SAUDIS. MINI-SUMMIT COULD RE-ACTIVATE COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS IN BEIRUT.

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3. APPEAL TO ASSAD:

TUENI SUGGESTED THAT ATHERTON, SAUNDERS, OR A DELEGATION OF CONGRESSMEN, PERHAPS OF ARAB EXTRACTION, SHOULD SEEK URGENT MEETING WITH ASSAD TO APPEAL TO HIM TO STOP THE FIGHTING. WHILE HE DID NOT MENTION THE SECRETARY, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS ALSO VERY MUCH IN HIS MIND, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE SUGGESTED ATHERTON SHOULD PROCEED DIRECTLY FROM CAIRO TO DAMASCUS. TUENI BELIEVES ASSAD MAY NOT BE RECEIVING ACCURATE REPORTS OF SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND IN PARTICULAR EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT KHADDAM'S ROLE IN BRIEFING ASSAD ON LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS.

4. UN FACT-FINDING MISSION:

TUENI ALSO WONDERED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF DISPATCHING HIGH-LEVEL UN FACT-FINDING MISSION TO BEIRUT ON URGENT BASIS. LEONARD SAID THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY IF ARABS THEMSELVES STRONGLY SUPPORT IT. TUENI THOUGHT THIS COULD BE DONE BY "PLAYING THE ISRAELI CARD", I.E., BY INDICATING THAT MISSION I.A. WOULD LOOK AT

ISRAELI/CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP AS WELL AS MORE SPECIFIC SITUATION IN BEIRUT. TUENI SPOKE OF POSSIBLE SOLUTION INVOLVING SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL (AT LEAST FROM BEIRUT) COUPLED WITH BREAKING OF ISRAELI/CHRISTIAN LINK. AS A LAST RESORT, TUENI WENT ON, IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO CONVENE MEETING OF SECURITY COUNCIL. HE RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM INHERENT IN THIS APPROACH ALONG LINES OF OUR

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2804

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS NIACT IMMEDIATE TO SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR SAUNDERS

ASSESSMENT LAST MONTH.

5. AT END OF LENGTHY BUT INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION, LEONARD SAID HE WOULD PASS TUENI'S ASSESSMENT OF THE BEIRUT SITUATION AS WELL AS HIS APPEAL FOR SOME NEW FORM OF US ACTION.

6. THE MOST STRIKING FEATURE OF THIS DISCUSSION WAS TUENI'S TONE OF DESPERATION. HE HAS SUBSEQUENTLY APPROACHED URQUHART, BUFFUM, AND UK AMBASSADOR RICHARD AND IS MEETING SHORTLY WITH SYRIAN AMB. CHOUFI. THE REPORTS WHICH HE IS RECEIVING FROM MODERATE CHRISTIAN SOURCES IN BEIRUT INDICATE, AS DO REPORTS FROM EMBASSY BEIRUT, THAT THE SITUATION THERE IS GETTING WORSE AND THAT SARKIS AND BOUTROS FIND THEMSELVES

IN AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION. HE IS ANXIOUSLY LOOKING
FOR US TO COME UP WITH SOME NEW IDEA OR PROPOSAL
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WHICH CAN HELP TO RETRIEVE THE SITUATION.

7. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS, BUFFUM, GUYER, AND
URQUHART TOLD LEONARD IT WAS THEIR PERSONAL VIEWS
THAT THE ONE REAL POSSIBILITY WAS FOR THE SECRETARY
TO GO TO DAMASCUS TO MEET WITH ASSAD. ONLY THIS,
THEY BELIEVE, WOULD DRAMATIZE TO ASSAD THE SERIOUSNESS
OF OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN
BEIRUT. YOUNG

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